

CHAPTER 160  
ADOPTION OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

PREAMBLE

These rules define and structure the adoption opportunity grant program. The services under the grant program are to be provided to special needs children, prospective adoptive families and adoptive families in an effort to place children in adoptive families and to prevent disruptions and dissolutions.

**441—160.1(234) Definitions.**

“*Adoptive family*” means an approved family who has a special needs child placed in their family for the purpose of adopting the child, or a family with a special needs child in their family whose adoption has been finalized by the court.

“*Applicant*” means a private agency licensed in Iowa as a child-placing agency that offers a continuum of child welfare services to families and special needs children, or an individual provider involved in providing services to adoptive families and special needs children which makes application for a grant.

“*Department*” means the Iowa department of human services.

“*Director*” means the director of the department of human services.

“*Grant review committee*” means a five-member committee composed of two departmental employees and two private child-placing agency employees or supervisors who work with children and adoptive families, but are not currently applying for a grant, and one member with a fiscal background, responsible for reviewing and designating grant awards.

“*Grantee*” means an applicant who has been awarded a grant.

“*Prospective adoptive family*” means a family with an approved home study waiting placement of a special needs child into their family for the purpose of adoption.

“*Special needs child*” means a child as defined in 441—subrule 201.3(1).

**441—160.2(234) Availability of grant funds.** The amount of money granted shall be contingent upon the amount of federal grant funds available to Iowa in a given year. The allocation of funds shall be in compliance with legislation and approved by the grant review committee.

**441—160.3(234) Project eligibility.**

**160.3(1) Grant awards.** Grants will be awarded to eligible applicants for specifically designed adoption projects with the duration of the projects based on the time frames specified in the relevant federal grant.

**160.3(2) Residence of clients.** A grantee may not use grant funds to serve residents of states other than Iowa.

**160.3(3) Services.** Grants will be awarded to provide one or more of the following services:

- a. Preplacement assessment and adoptive home studies of families wishing to adopt a special needs child.
- b. Training and preparation of families for adoption.
- c. Preparation of children for adoption.
- d. Postplacement services.
- e. Postadoption services.
- f. Other specified services as stated in the federal grant award to Iowa.

**441—160.4(234) Request for proposals for project grants.**

**160.4(1) Application.** The department will announce through a request for proposals the opening of an application period. The request shall state the purpose for which grant funds shall be spent. A grant application shall be included in the request for proposals. Applicants shall submit their grant proposal using Form 470-2910, Application for Adoption Opportunity Grant Funding, by the deadline specified in the announcement.

**160.4(2) Project proposal requirements.** Requirements for project proposals shall be specified in the "Adoption Opportunity Grant Application Packet." If a proposal does not contain the information specified in the application packet, or if it is late, it will be disapproved. Proposals accepted for review shall contain the following information:

- a. Application for Adoption Opportunity Grant Funding, Form 470-2910.
- b. Proposal summary.
- c. Reason for grant request, including statement of problems and needs.
- d. Agency background information and demonstrated effectiveness.
- e. Project goals, objectives and methods.
- f. Project monitoring and evaluation.
- g. Project budget and budget forms.
- h. Plans for future funding.
- i. Assurances and certification.
- j. Letters of support.
- k. Explanation of grantee share of matching funds, when applicable.
- l. Project checklist.

Projects will demonstrate that they can be replicated for use with families and special needs children in other parts of the state.

Projects will be coordinated with other local agencies or groups.

**441—160.5(234) Selection of proposals.**

**160.5(1) Evaluation of proposals.** All proposals completed as directed and submitted within the time frames allowed will be evaluated by the grant review committee to determine which applicants will be awarded grants.

**160.5(2) Factors in selection.** The following factors will be considered in selecting proposals for grant awards:

- a. The demonstrated need for the service in the program area selected and assurance that the proposed project does not duplicate other services offered in the community.
- b. The support of and coordination with other existing agencies providing services to the targeted population.
- c. The program structure, including how realistic goals and objectives are, likelihood of the anticipated impact on the problem addressed, experience serving similar populations or providing similar services, administration of funds, stability of the organization and the overall quality of the proposal in comparison to other proposals submitted.
- d. Plans for use of funds. Grant funds may not be used for construction, capital improvements, or purchase of real estate.
- e. Potential of replicating the project in other parts of the state.

**160.5(3) Scoring criteria.** A weighted criteria will be used to determine grant awards. A maximum of 110 points is possible. Determination of final point awards will be based on the following:

- a. Proposal summary—10 points.
- b. Statement of problems and need—20 points.
- c. Agency background information and demonstrated effectiveness—15 points.
- d. Project goals, objectives and methods of attainment—25 points.
- e. Project monitoring and evaluation—10 points.
- f. Budget information points—15 points.
- g. Future funding and applicant assurances and certification—5 points.
- h. Overall quality and impact of program—10 points.

**441—160.6(234) Project contracts.** The funds for approved applicants will be awarded through a contract entered into by the director and the applicant. The contract period shall not exceed the time frames of the federal grant awarded to the department. Expenditures shall be reimbursed monthly pursuant to the regular reimbursement procedures of the state of Iowa.

**441—160.7(234) Records.** Grantees shall keep client and fiscal records of services provided and any other records required by the department and specified in the contract.

**441—160.8(234) Evaluation of projects.** The department or a designee shall evaluate the grantee at least once prior to the end of the contract period to determine whether or not the goals are being met and shall provide feedback to the grantee. Funding is to be spent to meet the program goals stated in the contract. Grantees may request and receive copies of the department's evaluation of their grant project.

**441—160.9(234) Termination.** The contract may be terminated by either party at any time during the contract period by giving 30 days' notice to the other party.

**160.9(1) Notice of termination.** The department may terminate a contract upon 10 days' notice when a grantee fails to comply with the award stipulation, standards or conditions.

**160.9(2) Financial statement.** Within 45 days of termination of a contract, the grantee shall supply the department with a financial statement detailing all costs up to the effective date of the termination.

**160.9(3) Availability of funding.** The department shall administer the funds for the adoption grants contingent upon their availability. If the department lacks the funding necessary to fulfill its fiscal responsibility under the adoption grant program, the contracts shall be terminated or renegotiated.

**441—160.10(234) Appeals.** Applicants dissatisfied with the grant review committee's decision may file an appeal with the director. The written appeal must be received within ten working days of the date of the notice of decision; must be based on a contention that the process was conducted outside of statutory authority, violated state or federal law, policy or rules, did not provide adequate public notice, was altered without adequate public notice, or involved conflict of interest by staff or committee members; and must include a request for the director to review the decision and the reasons for dissatisfaction. Within ten working days of receipt of the appeal the director will review the appeal request and issue a final decision. No disbursements will be made to any applicant for a period of ten calendar days following the notice of decision. If an appeal is filed within ten days, all disbursements will be held pending a final decision on the appeal. All applicants involved will be notified if an appeal is filed and given the opportunity to be included as a party in the appeal.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 234.6.

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